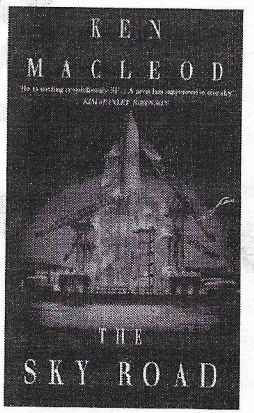
<plokta.con>

26-29 May, 2000

After several years of nagging by friends and enemies, the *Plokta* cabal has finally decided it's time to run another convention. **<plokta.con>** will be a small, friendly SF convention, and will held over the Spring Bank Holiday 2000. Many of you will already know us. The cabal hive mind comprises six grown-ups (*Steven Cain, Steve Davies, Giulia de Cesare, Sue Mason, Alison Scott and Mike Scott)*, one rampaging toddler (*Marianne Cain)* and one foul-tempered black cat (*George)*. And rather a lot of computers. We collectively formed the committee for the 1991 filk con and the 1995 Eastercon, and have individually run many other cons. We have published 16 issues of our fanzine, *Plokta*, and edited a wide variety of official and unofficial con newsletters. We have also had several excellent holidays together, and eaten any number of hot dinners.

A key element of **<plokta.con>** will be our small but perfectly formed programme, which will feature our Guest of Honour, **Ken MacLeod.** Ken's novels—*The Star Fraction*, *The Stone Canal*, *The Cassini Division*, and *The Sky Road*—blend cutting-edge SF with the detailed political visions of post-capitalist societies. All in all, we reckon he's one of the UK's hottest SF writers at the moment, and we're delighted that he's agreed to be our guest.



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The cabal particularly enjoy small cons, and **<plokta.con>** is unlikely to have more than 150 members. Also, we don't believe in reinventing the wheel, so we're picking aspects of recent UK cons that we've really enjoyed. Like *Seccon*, we will have a single stream programme, with both SF and fannish items and lengthy gaps suitable for the partaking of large meals. But we also want to capture some of the light-hearted feeling that was such a success at *Year of the Wombat*, though preferably without the pump-action water pistols. And we want the con to have the sort of fannish ambience of the *Miscons*—not to mention the real ale.

We thought the fanzine room at *Attitude* was splendid, and we hope to have a repro room available for you to produce one-shots during the convention. The plan is that the superfluous technology in this room will spend at least part of the convention hooked up to the Internet, and we've got the *Plokta* resident mad scientist, Dr Plokta, working on setting up the vat of hecto jelly as a network printer. We would also like there to be a small dealers' room.

One catch is that we're not sure where the con will be yet. We're talking to small, characterful hotels in the South East of England, on train lines from London. We want to end up somewhere that won't be particularly busy over the Bank Holiday, but that is still an interesting destination in itself, with decent places to eat and things to do. And we'd like the hotel to have gardens, so we can hold some programming outside if the weather is nice. We're confident that we'll have an agreement with a hotel in the next month or so.

Because we haven't got a definite site, we aren't taking memberships yet. We hope to do so soon, and expect that they will cost you twenty pounds, at least until the end of Novacon. And we won't be having traditional progress reports. Instead, you will be able to read about our plans for **<plokta.con>** in the pages of *Plokta*, which all con members will receive until after the convention. Honestly. The lengths some people will go to in order to find material for their fanzine.

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